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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 001185

SIPDIS

NEA/ARP, NEA/I

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [KU](#)
SUBJECT: BITS AND PIECES FROM THE IRAQI CHARGE ON
KUWAIT-IRAQ RELATIONS

REF: A. A) BAGHDAD 3764
[1](#)B. B) KUWAIT 1137

Classified By: Political Counselor Pete O'Donohue for reasons 1.4 b and
d

[1](#)1. Summary: During a December 1 call on the Iraqi Embassy, the DCM and the Iraqi Charge compared notes on the progress of Kuwait-Iraq relations. While acknowledging perennial frustration over his role as Charge for a government that regularly leaves him out of the loop on major policy decisions, the Iraqi Charge provided observations on a number of items. These include the mysterious nature of a recent message from PM Maliki, non-progress on the clearance of the Khor Abdullah Waterway, worrisome attacks on trucks traveling between Kuwait and Iraq, and frustration on the debt issue. The Charge appeared unaware of a November 11 GOK-GOI protocol on ship traffic in the Umm Qasr area. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) DCM, accompanied by POLCOUNS, paid a call December 1 on Iraqi Charge d'affaires Fadhil Hamad Khudair Al-Azzawi. During a tour d'horizon on Kuwait-Iraq bilateral relations, the DCM queried Azzawi on a number of issues reported ref A. Al-Azzawi offered the following observations on specific items:

-- Minister of Culture Visit: the Iraqi Minister of Culture called on Kuwaiti Prime Minister Shaykh Nasser Al Sabah on November 27 bearing a message from PM Maliki. Reflecting his typically under-informed status as the GOI's representative in Kuwait, Azzawi admitted he never saw the actual text. The PM's sole reaction after scanning the text was to ask the meaning of a statement that "communication between Iraq and Kuwait had not been under the control of the Iraqi people since 1992." According to Azzawi, the Minister was unable to offer further context or explanation.

-- Khor Abdullah Waterway: Azzawi said he received two GOK diplomatic notes in early October proposing to the Iraqis that the two sides engage in bilateral talks October 13-14 on the "clearance of civilian waterways". Azzawi said he forwarded the notes to the MFA in Baghdad but had received no response. He noted that the GOK had delivered a follow-up note on November 30 leaving the proposed talks open to a date convenient to the Iraqi side. This note has also been forwarded to Baghdad. Azzawi appeared completely unaware, however, of any proposed draft memorandum of understanding regarding wreck-clearing in the Khor Abdullah as noted ref A.

-- Expulsion of Iraqis: Azzawi commented that Iraqis had been involved in the case of a Kuwaiti State Security (KSS) official who was arrested recently, along with a member of the Kuwait military, for taking bribes to facilitate the travel of persons listed on a travel ban, an item that was reported in the Kuwaiti press. Azzawi noted that at least seventeen Iraqi citizens had been implicated in bribing the corrupt KSS official and that his Embassy and the GOK had

cooperated to compile a list of involved persons. The majority of these were arrested by Kuwaiti authorities and have already been expelled back to Iraq. Azzawi provided a list of the seventeen names and this information has been circulated within the Embassy. Azzawi said he shared the prevailing GOK view that the arrested KSS official was motivated purely by greed, not by ideology.

-- Truck Security: Azzawi reviewed with DCM the recent series of attacks by armed criminal gangs on trucks traveling between Kuwait and Iraq. In the ugliest incident, an Egyptian driver was murdered; a second driver was rescued by GOI authorities but suffered injuries. Azzawi acknowledged that the attacks represented a lapse by GOI authorities who had the responsibility to ensure security on the Iraqi side of the border. (Comment: Embassy was aware of these attacks from other sources and will follow up further with GOK and trucking companies after the impending Eid holiday. End Comment).

-- Compensation/Debt/KAA: Azzawi stated that official dialogue on these issues is ongoing and said he believed that the best chance for progress on the issue of compensation was through the UNCC program, but he was unable to offer any specifics. He noted that both sides were being careful to avoid public references to the debt/compensation issue in order to avoid arousing popular sentiments.

-- Sons of Iraq: Al-Azzawi expressed optimism that the Sons of Iraq will be successfully absorbed by the Iraqi police and military; he lauded their contribution in bringing calm and security to Anbar Province.

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12. (C) Azzawi did not mention the Kuwait-Iraq protocol signed November 11 at the Kuwait Naval base (and reported in the Kuwaiti press on December 2) that outlines how Iraqi and Kuwaiti vessels will patrol and interact in a waterway in the area of Umm Qasr. (Comment: The two nations' success in finalizing this protocol stands in contrast to their inability to conduct a dialogue on the clearance of the Khor Abdullah. End Comment.)

13. (C) As noted ref B, Azzawi is a self-described "secular Sunni," married to a Shia, who has expressed frustration and dismay over his government's perceived pro-Shia slant and susceptibility to Iranian pressure. Azzawi has acknowledged to Embassy that his government seldom keeps him up-to-date on policy decisions or the state-of-play on high-level negotiations and he is openly at odds with his nominal deputy (a Shia who Azzawi alleges is a pro-Maliki intelligence agent).

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